PLAINFIELD

Hampshire County

NARRATIVE
GEOGRAPHY
GOVERNMENT
DEMOGRAPHICS
HOUSING_CHARACTERISTICS
TRANSPORTATION
CULTURE AND RECREATION
MISCELLANEOUS

NARRATIVE

Narrative

Plainfield is a small hilltown, population 571, situated on the northwestern border of Hampshire County, about 25 miles east of Pittsfield and 30 miles northwest of Northampton.

Any profile of Plainfield would be incomplete without reference to its human character. There is a rich medley of all ages and occupations, of farmers and writers, tradespeople and artists, craftworkers and homemakers, healthcare workers, builders, secretaries and others. Plainfield's commitment to the Commonwealth's conservation of natural resources inherent in the Berkshire hill towns is a human document, creative and enduring. Because of this commitment, the town is dedicated to careful planning to assure a growth rate that the community can handle given the condition of town roads, availability of services and continued protection of natural resources. Internal factors such as lack of finances, outmoded zoning by-laws and a volunteer government, compounded by external elements such as recent improvements to Route 116 and an expensive new inn and recreation facilities at Swift River have severely taxed the time and ability of volunteer board members to cope with the increase in work load.

Although the population density is still low compared to other towns, Plainfield is growing rapidly. After decades of negative growth, the population has almost doubled in the past 20 years. It has exceeded population predictions made 20 years ago when a 40% increase was projected. The actual growth was 70%. Recent predictions are that the population will triple over the next 30 years. Residential land-use has changed, as well. The current situation is characterized by a proportionately greater number of smaller households, more widely distributed. Long-time residents have some concern about the suburbanization of the town, noting that nearly half of the residents have lived in Plainfield less than five years, while only one out of five have resided here more than 15 years.

(Narrative supplied by community)

GEOGRAPHY

Location

Northwestern Massachusetts, bordered by Hawley on the north, Ashfield on the northeast and east, Cummington on the south, Windsor on the west, and Savoy on the northwest. Plainfield is 28 miles northeast of Pittsfield, 29 miles southwest of Greenfield, and 117 miles northwest of Boston.

Total Area: 21.26 sq. miles

Land Area: 21.05 sq. miles

Population: 571

Density: 27 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Cummington Hill Station)

Normal temperature in January.....19.9°F
Normal temperature in July.....67.3°F
Normal annual precipitation.....46.0"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Plainfield, Worthington, Goshen, Ashfield

Regional Planning Agency

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)

GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 634-5420

Telephone Numbers for Public Information

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen
Administrative Assistant
Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1807

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%
Total Registered	334	
Democrats	87	26.0 %
Republicans	56	16.8 %
Other parties	0	0.0 %
Unenrolled Voters	191	57.2 %

Legislators

Senators and Representatives by City and Town

DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Plainfield town, Hampshire County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent
Total population	589	100.0
SEX AND AGE		
Male	286	48.6
Female	303	51.4
Under 5 years	28	4.8
5 to 9 years	51	8.7
10 to 14 years	42	7.1
15 to 19 years	37	6.3
20 to 24 years	13	2.2
25 to 34 years	45	7.6
35 to 44 years	109	18.5
45 to 54 years	122	20.7
55 to 59 years	35	5.9
60 to 64 years	31	5.3
65 to 74 years	46	7.8
75 to 84 years	24	4.1
85 years and over	6	1.0
Median age (years)	42.3	(X)
18 years and over	443	75.2
Male	221	37.5
Female	222	37.7
21 years and over	427	72.5
62 years and over	91	15.4
65 years and over	76	12.9
Male	42	7.1
Female	34	5.8
RACE		
One race	581	98.6
White	578	98.1
Black or African American	-	-
American Indian and Alaska Native	2	0.3
Asian	1	0.2
Asian Indian	-	-
Chinese	-	-
Filipino	-	-
Japanese	-	-
Korean	-	-
Vietnamese	1	0.2
Other Asian [1]	-	-
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	-	-
Native Hawaiian	-	-
Guamanian or Chamorro	-	-
Samoan	-	-
Other Pacific Islander [2]	-	-
Some other race	-	-
Two or more races	8	1.4
Race alone or in combination with one or more other races: [3]		
White	586	99.5
Black or African American	-	-
American Indian and Alaska Native	10	1.7
Asian	1	0.2
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	-	-
Some other race	-	-

Subject	Number	Percent
HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
Total population	589	100.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4	0.7
Mexican	-	-
Puerto Rican	2	0.3
Cuban	1	0.2
Other Hispanic or Latino	1	0.2
Not Hispanic or Latino	585	99.3
White alone	574	97.5
RELATIONSHIP		
Total population	589	100.0
In households	589	100.0
Householder	243	41.3
Spouse	148	25.1
Child	168	28.5
Own child under 18 years	144	24.4
Other relatives	5	0.8
Under 18 years	2	0.3
Nonrelatives	25	4.2
Unmarried partner	21	3.6
In group quarters	-	-
Institutionalized population	-	-
Noninstitutionalized population	-	-
HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Total households	243	100.0
Family households (families)	167	68.7
With own children under 18 years	76	31.3
Married-couple family	148	60.9
With own children under 18 years	63	25.9
Female householder, no husband present	11	4.5
With own children under 18 years	7	2.9
Nonfamily households	76	31.3
Householder living alone	63	25.9
Householder 65 years and over	25	10.3
Households with individuals under 18 years	78	32.1
Households with individuals 65 years and over	58	23.9
Average household size	2.42	(X)
Average family size	2.92	(X)
HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Total housing units	311	100.0
Occupied housing units	243	78.1
Vacant housing units	68	21.9
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	49	15.8
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	1.9	(X)
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	5.4	(X)
HOUSING TENURE		
Occupied housing units	243	100.0
Owner-occupied housing units	208	85.6
Renter-occupied housing units	35	14.4
Average household size of owner-occupied units	2.45	(X)
Average household size of renter-occupied units	2.29	(X)

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

[1] Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

[2] Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

[3] In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman)-
Town Stats - Free market Statistics

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)
DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State:	0
Conventional Federal:	0

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP:	0
Federal (Section 8):	0

TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Public roads and highways in the area are generally in good condition and meet the demands of modern transportation.

Major Highways

Principal highways are State Routes 8A and 116. State Route 9, which runs roughly E-W across Massachusetts, is easily accessible in neighboring Cummington.

Rail

There is no passenger or freight rail service in Plainfield, but the network of intermodal facilities serving Massachusetts is easily accessible.

Bus

Plainfield is a member of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA). There is no fixed route service, but FRTA provides paratransit services for the elderly and disabled through the Williamsburg Council on Aging.

Other

CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog

MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

RECREATION

Telephone Numbers for Public Information

Recreational Facilities(Recreational sites and activities)

Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section

MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

None

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

None

UTILITIES

Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.